

### **Appendix 3 – Home to School Transport Options Appraisal for Provision via Discretionary Powers**

We need to think differently about our home to school transport offer because increased demand is creating unsustainable budget pressures. Revising our current offer also presents an opportunity to support more young people to travel independently in line with current policy.

Our policy of providing transport has resulted in an expectation of free transport provision. This is not in the best interest of children and families in the longer term. This can result in a missed opportunity for them to take part in training that facilitates their ability to travel independently and become an active member of the community.

We are proposing that we move from a transport offer to a travel assistance offer as required in legislation. We have set out a number of aims and have tested the options against the following priorities:

1. Supporting those most in need;
2. Promoting independence;
3. Providing the most cost effective travel assistance;
4. Promoting and encouraging the use of sustainable travel.

These are in line with the principles of the Integrated Transport Programme and have been used to assess the options.

The options tested relate to the following areas:

- SEN Post-16 provision
- Paid for transport
- Evreham Promise
- Ivinghoe Promise
- Under 5's transport

For each area, a number of potential options have been considered and detailed below. Public consultation will take place on the aims of the policy and the options for the above areas.

Options for discussion

<b>SEN Post-16</b>	
400 pupils currently being transported to special schools, FE Colleges and Out of county placements at a cost of <b>£1,395,209.88</b>	
<b>Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discounted travel (subsidised) on public networks or other appropriate provision</li> <li>• Extend the use of Independent Travel Training</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not changing the policy will result in an unsustainable budget pressure, as the number of students with SEN at post 16 institutions has increased and is projected to continue increasing up to 2024/25.</li> <li>• Ensuring that any policy change continues to actively promote and encourage participation.</li> <li>• Financial savings are lower than anticipated due to a number of students continuing to require personalised travel arrangements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journey towards independence</li> <li>• Reduced burden on adult provision for all those who are able to be trained to use transport</li> <li>• Contribution based system ensures that those families with the ability to pay do so</li> <li>• Brings Post 16 SEN policy in line with Post 16 offer to other students</li> </ul>
<b>Financial</b>	<p>College students are already able to access bursaries of up to £1500 each year, and this covers vulnerable groups. In addition, many of our colleges also run transport services to support attendance.</p> <p>Approximately 25% of the cohort currently requires wheelchair or PA support, so it would be reasonable to anticipate that the majority of the remaining 75% of the cohort could be transported via a range of other means, including buses, trains and other shared transport. For those travelling on mainstream buses, they would pay for their provision. Decision to be made as to appropriate level of contribution in recognition that SEN students usually have to travel further to receive appropriate support for education.</p>
<p><b>Other relevant information</b></p> <p><b>Information to support change within the H2S guidance document</b></p>	<p><b>Home to school travel assistance for pupils with SEN or disabilities</b></p> <p>Research indicates that there can be significant short and long term benefits in the application of independent travel training for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. The training given can result in savings to transport budgets in the short term, but can also provide longer term benefits to the individual in terms of a skill for life that might lead to greater social inclusion and employment prospects.</p>

## Assessment – SEN Post-16 Transport

Implement charging for transport for all (full or partial cost recovery)

Criteria	Assessment	Comment
Support those most in need	Red	This is an option that does not support those most in need, as it does not differentiate between those requiring personalised travel arrangements or those whose families are on a low income. The local authority should facilitate and encourage attendance of Post 16 students with SEN. Implementing charging for all, is not a workable option without some additional mechanisms to support those who are most vulnerable, whether financially or physically due to their diagnosed condition that impacts on their ability to access mainstream education.
Promote independence	Red	Maintaining our current provision and charging for it does not promote independence as young people are not learning skills that will support them through to adulthood .
Provide the most cost effective travel assistance	Yellow	To retain transport as it currently exists but simply implement charging would not be cost effective due to the high numbers of taxi provision currently being used unless we could implement full charging for all and this is unlikely to be reasonable.
Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel	Red	<p>A significant proportion of the transport for this cohort is by bespoke provision.</p> <p>This may still be the case for those requiring modified transport or, where travel networks pose an issue. For those attending more mainstream provision, use of sustainable travel (public networks) is a more realistic option.</p>

Discounted travel (subsidised) on public networks or other appropriate provision-  
RECOMMENDED

Criteria	Assessment	Comment
Support those most in need	Green	Typically, those with an EHCP find that their needs are best supported by a provision that is further away than their nearest college or school. By asking for a contribution towards any travel arrangement made by the Local Authority, this would permit appropriate travel arrangements to be offered based on need, but bring the Post 16 SEN transport offer more in line with other Post 16 students. Means tested would ensure that those who meet the low income criteria are not disadvantaged and that payment is based on ability to pay, rather than extent of SEN or disability.
Promote independence	Amber	The success of this option goes hand in hand with the proposals to extend independent travel training. This will help to prepare pupils for their transition into adulthood by increasing their independence and confidence to travel.
Provide the most cost effective travel assistance	Green	At present, we are paying the full cost of provision. This is not a realistic or sustainable option. There will be some students who are unable to travel without assistance, and this would be clear in their assessments, which should take into account all the aspects of their needs, and what they require to attend and continue in education. By implementing a contribution based scheme, this will support consideration of the most cost effective travel option and if this is introduced in line with independent travel training, will support the use of less costly travel arrangements in the future.
Promote and encourage the use of	Amber	A contribution based scheme must be considered in conjunction with independent travel training to ensure that students are

sustainable travel



supported and encouraged to use more sustainable modes of travel than the current arrangement.

Extend the use of Independent Travel Training - RECOMMENDED

Criteria	Assessment	Comment
Support those most in need	Green	<p>Reducing risk and addressing vulnerability of students is a priority. During the transition planning stage where young people are expected to make decisions around the possibilities open to them as they enter adulthood, it is anticipated that working towards independence will reduce poor outcomes for young people, especially around employment, living independently, having good health and being included in society.</p>
Promote independence	Green	<p>In preparation for adulthood, it is expected that the majority of young people beyond the age of 16 will travel independently to their place of education.</p> <p>Independent travel training supports young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to engage in activities which support outcomes associated with growing independence.</p> <p>It is recognised that Independent Travel Training has the following immediate benefits for the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enables the student to be more independent and use his or her own initiative</li> <li>• Improves self-confidence</li> <li>• Enables students to access positive social, educational and professional development activities</li> <li>• Reduces the student's reliance on family, friends and professionals</li> <li>• Helps to improve social skills and maintain relationships</li> <li>• Can have physical health benefits where the student walks all or part of the way</li> </ul>
Provide the most cost effective travel assistance	Green	<p>Moving towards a vision of encouraging and facilitating our Post-16 SEN students to accessing existing mainstream travel options would release resources to enable support to be given to those who require it most. Our</p>

		<p>current provision – a mixture of taxi and minibus transport is not a sustainable option for the future when we take into account the increasing demand and numbers scheduled to enter this cohort during the next 7 years – potentially an increase of 174%</p>
<p>Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>There are currently a significant number of pupils accessing bespoke transport arrangements. While there is recognition that this may be appropriate in some cases, there is a cohort of young people primarily attending FE colleges who should reasonably transition towards shared or mainstream travel. Most of our schools and colleges for Post-16 education run transport to their campuses from main transport hubs, and this should be encouraged for those who require additional support. There are some pupils who would be moving from mainstream education to FE colleges who would and should be accessing mainstream transport provision (buses, trains, walking, cycling).</p>

<b>Paid for transport – seats on buses/taxis</b>	
3728 pupils currently being transported to schools.	
<b>Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review charging formula – move to banding.</li> <li>• Reduce all available transport through rationalisation of routes and bus sizes (knock on effect of more effective management of eligible passengers)</li> <li>• Create our own in-house fleet</li> <li>• Tender contracts</li> <li>• Remove our transport so that public transport becomes the available travel option</li> <li>• Recommend increase is phased over two years, with a clear charging model for parents so that they are aware of the costs to come</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drop off in numbers of travellers if charges are unreasonable/not in line with other providers</li> <li>• Lose the opportunities that economies of scale offer if the first risk materialises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased opportunity for commercialisation of routes which would also benefit the local community</li> </ul>
<b>Financial</b>	Cost of provision <b>£3,149,319.29</b> . Income from these seats totals <b>£2,838,343.00</b> . Shortfall of <b>£310,976.29</b> which amounts to a subsidy by the Local Authority.
<b>Other relevant information</b>  <b>Information to support change within the H2S guidance document</b>	<p><b>Capacity building with schools and transport operators</b></p> <p>In a financial climate where spending is reduced and costs are increasing local authorities may well find that they have less funding available to support discretionary transport provision, but there may be alternative solutions.</p> <p>Many academies, with support from their local communities, are taking full advantage of their academy freedoms and are collaborating with other stakeholders and providers to offer discretionary transport to their schools. Local authorities can greatly assist with these initiatives by sharing their experience, expertise and influence in the procurement of transport. (See Case Study 2)</p>



**Year on year impact of increasing charges on Paid-for transport cohort**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Reduction in payers</b>	<b>Percentage reduction</b>
<b>2018/19</b>	329 (predicted)	8% (predicted)
<b>2017/18</b>	454	10%
<b>2016/17</b>	627	12%
<b>2015/16</b>	773	13%
<b>2014/15</b>	826	12%

The residual effect of the increase in charges for paid-for transport is a year on year drop off in the numbers of travellers seen above. For this reason, consideration should be given to a further potential drop off as a result of a decision to increase charges.

## Assessment – Paid for transport

Review charging formula – move to banding relating to the length of journey  
(charges increase for longer journeys)

Criteria	Assessment	Comment
Support those most in need	Red	Whilst this option may reduce the current subsidy for paid for transport, it does not target those most in need of transport or support.
Promote independence	Amber	Paid for transport permits children to use buses rather than be driven to school, but it does not encourage use of other travel solutions such as the public transport network or walking / cycling.
Provide the most cost effective travel assistance	Amber	Reviewing the charging formula may allow us to reduce the current subsidy for paid for transport, however it restricts options to allow a public network provider or the schools to supply this service, which may be able to be done for lower cost.
Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel	Red	The current transport fleet is not the most environmental fleet. It is likely that procurement of a public transport provider to cover these routes could lead to lower emission vehicles providing transport. Removal of the paid for transport may lead to school choices at locations that are better served by public transport or are accessible by more sustainable transport means. Increasing charges may also lead to parents choosing to drive their children to school as opposed to paying increased fees.

Remove contracted transport so that public transport becomes the available travel option – RECOMMENDED FOR VIABLE ROUTES

Criteria	Assessment	Comment
Support those most in need	Green	By removing the current subsidy on paid for travel, resources can be better targeted to those most in need. Whilst a long term aim, the option of the market picking up the school transport routes may allow an enhanced transport network to local communities at other times of the day, which will better service rural communities.
Promote independence	Green	Allowing children to utilise the public transport network to access school (at the right age) will provide them with valuable life skills.
Provide the most cost effective travel assistance	Green	It is likely that procurement of a public transport network from the market will be more cost effective over the long term. It also has the benefit of reducing the cost of transport for eligible children on viable routes served by public transport, as these children could receive a funded bus pass instead of travel via a dedicated school bus.
Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel	Amber	Removal of current school buses may result in parents choosing to drive their child to school as opposed to utilising other transport methods. However, over time parental choice of school should take account of available transport options and schools should encourage the use of sustainable travel and make arrangements for travel options to be put in place to cover the areas of most demand.

## Create our own in-house fleet

Criteria	Assessment	Comment
Support those most in need	Amber	<p>This option could either be implemented for areas where there is high need and it would be a cost effective solution that would generate competition. Conversely, it could be implemented where no appetite is shown to extend part of a public network or provision of a community solution.</p> <p>The need addresses those in rural areas, but would change from year to year, which could potentially be resource intensive, and not the most sustainable way of addressing need.</p>
Promote independence	Amber	Some development of life skills in this option (being in the right place at the right time for the bus), and it would enable children to travel with their peers.
Provide the most cost effective travel assistance	Amber	A public network would be the preferred option, however, it would be possible run an in-house provision as a community resource, being available to schools during the day for curriculum activities, extra-curriculum activities, community events, etc.
Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel	Amber	Similar to public network – parents would need to be reassured that the provision would be there for their children to prevent them opting to drive them rather than depend on this provision.

<b>Evreham Promise</b>	
303 pupils currently being transported at a cost of <b>£288,414.98</b>	
<b>Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove option of free school transport</li> <li>• Implement charging for transport</li> <li>• Offer routes to commercial sector</li> <li>• Recommend increase is phased over a number of years, with a clear charging model for parents so that they are aware of the costs to come</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential financial hardship for some families – means testing an option? Within threshold of low income as already provided for within the scope of the legislation</li> <li>• Parents may choose alternate schools for their children – these may not be in Bucks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only eligible travellers will receive free transport as per statutory guidelines</li> </ul>
<b>Financial</b>	There would be some cost if parents chose to continue to send their children to school in Chalfont as it is not the nearest school in Bucks. Current ACORN data would indicate that approximately 20% those travelling fall into the low income/vulnerable groups. They would be entitled to assistance if they meet the national threshold.
<b>Other relevant information</b>	<p><b>What is the Evreham Promise?</b></p> <p>Evreham County Secondary school closed in 1989. At the time, the decision was made to provide transport to the pupils from the feeder schools of Evreham to enable them to attend Chalfont Community College. Since then, we have continued to transport children to Chalfont Community College, even if E-Act Burnham Park Academy is closer (plus, transport would still be provided to entitled pupils to E-Act Burnham Park Academy).</p> <p>Some pupils are closer to their nearest out of county school, and decision to be considered as to whether we consider this as a pragmatic option in line with arrangements on the Oxfordshire border.</p>

## Assessment – Evreham Promise

- Remove option of free school transport
- Implement charging for transport
- Offer routes to commercial sector

Criteria	Assessment	Comment
Support those most in need	Green	Travel assistance would be available to those most in need, to support their attendance in education. Application via the usual routes to have special circumstance (income etc.) taken into account.
Promote independence	Green	Skills learned and acquired by travelling on public networks will be useful into adulthood.
Provide the most cost effective travel assistance	Green	<p>By moving from contracted to public networks there may be some savings via economies of scale.</p> <p>We are paying (unnecessarily) to transport children from one area of Buckinghamshire to another, based on an agreement when a school closed almost 30 years ago. The arguments for doing this no longer stand, as there are schools in closer proximity, and it is a parental choice to attend the Chalfonts School which is further away.</p>
Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel	Amber	<p>Some parents may choose to transport their children rather than pay, and this would cause issues in terms of congestion for the schools.</p> <p>Parents would need to have confidence in the public networks that their children would continue to be safely and reliably transported.</p>

Retain current arrangement

Criteria	Assessment	Comment
Support those most in need	Red	We know that there are 29% of this cohort who would fall into the lower ACORN groups, and would potentially require assistance if they were to choose to travel to Chalfont. Arrangements to request assistance with travel (low income assistance) would be available. All other students should be using public networks, or paying to travel.
Promote independence	Red	Utilising a contracted bus service may not promote independence in the traditional sense, however, there are some skills that are being developed, and pupils are supported in traveling with their peers.
Provide the most cost effective travel assistance	Red	This is not a cost effective arrangement, when there are now schools that are closer in proximity. By transporting children to a school that is further away, we are putting the viability of that school in jeopardy. There would be an impact on Chalfonts if a significant number of families decided that they were not prepared to pay to travel all that way. Chalfont could choose to put on their own transport if they wanted to negate this risk.
Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel	Red	We are currently putting on buses and in some cases duplicating the public network routes.

<b>Ivinghoe Promise</b>					
135 pupils currently being transported at a cost of <b>£64,284.57</b>					
<b>Recommendation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain current arrangement</li> <li>• Implement charging for transport</li> <li>• Offer routes to commercial sector</li> <li>• Recommend increase is phased over a number of years, with a clear charging model for parents so that they are aware of the costs to come</li> </ul>				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><b>Risks</b></th> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><b>Benefits</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the rule was taken away parents would apply to their nearest (out county) school and may or may not be admitted. If admitted, and the distance is greater than the statutory distance and/or unsafe, then we would have to supply a taxi.</li> <li>• In the event that pupils could not be admitted to the out of county school and had requested the Bucks school as a the next nearest then we would have to provide transport as 'Nearest school with a place'.</li> </ul> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would bring in line with statutory, and only eligible travellers would receive free transport</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<b>Risks</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the rule was taken away parents would apply to their nearest (out county) school and may or may not be admitted. If admitted, and the distance is greater than the statutory distance and/or unsafe, then we would have to supply a taxi.</li> <li>• In the event that pupils could not be admitted to the out of county school and had requested the Bucks school as a the next nearest then we would have to provide transport as 'Nearest school with a place'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would bring in line with statutory, and only eligible travellers would receive free transport</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Benefits</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the rule was taken away parents would apply to their nearest (out county) school and may or may not be admitted. If admitted, and the distance is greater than the statutory distance and/or unsafe, then we would have to supply a taxi.</li> <li>• In the event that pupils could not be admitted to the out of county school and had requested the Bucks school as a the next nearest then we would have to provide transport as 'Nearest school with a place'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would bring in line with statutory, and only eligible travellers would receive free transport</li> </ul>				
<b>Financial</b>	The financial impact is no greater if we apply the statutory guidelines.				
<b>Other relevant information</b>	<p><b>What is the Ivinghoe Promise?</b></p> <p>This is an arrangement already in place in other areas of the county where the nearest qualifying school is out of county, and there is a 'significant pattern of parental choice' for the out of county school. We provide free transport.</p> <p>Where these schools are closest but there is a 'significant pattern of parental choice' for a local Buckinghamshire school that is further away, then free transport will also be provided to that school as well. This particularly affects Tring School as currently Marsworth and Pitstone have a 'significant pattern of parental choice' for Tring School and transport would be provided there whereas Cheddington, Dagnall, Ivinghoe Aston and Edlesborough all have a 'significant pattern of parental choice' for Cottesloe School and are provided with transport there.</p> <p>The policy currently states that the schools included will be reviewed annually.</p>				



Assessment – Ivinghoe Promise - RECOMMENDED

- Remove option of free school transport
- Implement charging for transport
- Offer routes to commercial sector

Criteria	Assessment	Comment
Support those most in need	Green	Limited number of families within the current cohort who fall into the financially vulnerable bracket. It would not be unreasonable to ask parents to pay for the transport if they chose to still apply to the nearer out of county school.
Promote independence	Green	Skills learned and acquired by travelling on public networks will be useful into adulthood.
Provide the most cost effective travel assistance	Amber	This arrangement exists as a result of a pattern of parental choice. By removing transport, there is the possibility that parental choice would shift, however costs may be less.
Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel	Green	Limited public networks currently exist, but these could be expanded over time. Pupils are being transported by buses which is the preferred method of transport.

Retain current arrangement

Criteria	Assessment	Comment
Support those most in need	Amber	Limited number of families within the current cohort who fall into the financially vulnerable bracket.
Promote independence	Amber	This would be greater if public networks were being used, however, children are learning life skills while navigating transport from one location to another.
Provide the most cost effective travel assistance	Green	This arrangement exists as a result of a pattern of parental choice. By enabling pupils to attend the out of county school, there is a saving, as their nearest Bucks school is further and transport costs would be greater.
Promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel	Green	Limited public networks currently exist, but these could be expanded over time. Pupils are being transported by buses which is the preferred method of transport.

<b>Under 5's - Nursery and Special</b>	
8 children currently being transported at a cost of £73,651.71	
<b>Recommendation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All future cases to be reviewed via the School Transport Exceptions Panel as there is no legal duty to provide school transport for children who are not of statutory school age.</li> <li>Immediate review of the current cases with outline of plan once they enter into formal education.</li> </ul>
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cost may be passed on to other areas (social care or health)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced cost to Education</li> </ul>
<b>Financial</b>	No additional information at present
<b>Other relevant information</b>	Decision to be taken, as these children are not of statutory school age. Parents to be offered travel assistance via bus pass or mileage if this would be more cost effective.

Consider inclusion of the following statement in the policy for clarity

*Pre-School Children aged 2-4 years old*

*Where a pre-school child either has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or is undergoing an EHCP Assessment and is placed at a primary special school, in Buckinghamshire, in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, they may be entitled to travel assistance. To be considered eligible there needs to be medical or social reasons, supported by professional evidence for example from a social worker or medical professional, why your child cannot attend the place without Council travel assistance. If deemed entitled to travel assistance, a charge will be levied.*